

his law degree from DePaul University. He was appointed superintendent of the Illinois State Police by Governor Jim Edgar and held that position for 7 years. He was then called to Washington, DC, to serve as second in command at the District of Columbia Metropolitan Police Department.

In 2002, Terry became chief of the United States Capitol Police and was instrumental in facilitating the substantial growth of that force in the challenging days following 9/11/2001.

After a brief stint in the private sector, Terry returned to public service when he was appointed by Majority Leader HARRY REID to serve as Sergeant at Arms. HARRY REID, himself a former Capitol Hill policeman, understood the responsibility and understood Terry was the right person for the job.

As I noted earlier, during his tenure as the Sergeant at Arms, Terry has done an exemplary job of balancing security and public access to the Capitol and to the Senate. His steady management hand, his quick smile, his constant presence in the halls of the Capitol and Senate office buildings are going to be greatly missed.

I wish to thank Terry Gainer personally for his friendship, support, the little favors he has done for me and for every Member of the Senate to make our lives and the lives of our family better. You have truly added to this great institution, as much as any person who served because you have made your mark and you have kept us safe and you have kept the millions of visitors during your tenure safe as well.

That is quite an accomplishment, Terry.

Congratulations to you and especially to Irene, who has been patient throughout it all, with her own career and her own effort, raising the family and making her mark professionally. The two of you are quite an example to all of us of public service at its best.

Thanks, Terry, for your service.

And now comes the tough responsibility of following in the steps of Terry Gainer.

Majority Leader REID has announced that Drew Willison, who is in the Chamber here today, will be replacing Terry as the next Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper—officially on Monday.

Drew has spent more than 5 years in two stints as the Deputy Sergeant at Arms, and he has learned from the best—Terry Gainer.

Prior to his work in the Sergeant at Arms office, Drew was a senior member of the Senate Appropriations Committee staff, where we worked together. He had roles in the Energy and Water Subcommittee effort, as well as the Legislative Branch Appropriations. His experience and knowledge of the legislative branch will serve him well in his new capacity.

I congratulate Drew and wish him the very best of luck. Terry's service as Sergeant at Arms has set the bar very high, but I know, Drew, you are up to the challenge.

Mr. President, let me end by thanking again Terry, Irene Gainer, the Gainer family, and all who support them for unselfishly giving to this Senate such an extraordinary contribution—for sharing their husband, father, and grandfather with our home State of Illinois and with this great Nation for so many years.

Terry and Irene have more than earned the right to move to the next chapter in their lives and to celebrate that time with their 6 children and 14 grandchildren.

I congratulate Terry on his distinguished public service career, for his accomplishments as a law enforcement officer, a decorated veteran, and the Senate Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper. Most importantly, I thank Terry for his friendship.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO TERRY GAINER AND DARYL CHAPPELLE

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, before he leaves the floor, let me offer my congratulations to the Sergeant at Arms, Terry Gainer, and also my thanks to him for his service to this great institution. We know we will miss him but also wish him well in the next chapter of his life.

Mr. President, I also want to express, as have the majority leader and the Republican leader, my best wishes to Daryl Chappelle, as he leaves after 40 years of service to the U.S. Senate.

There are some people you run into each day who sort of make you feel better and brighten your day, and Daryl was one of those people.

I know we get involved in some pretty tough debates around here, and people sometimes walk around with a scowl on their face, but it is nice when people like Daryl help break that mood and remind us that we are lucky to be alive each day and come to work in such a wonderful place as the U.S. Senate.

I wish both Chief Gainer and Daryl well in the next chapter of their lives.

VA ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I came to the floor primarily to talk about a very serious matter; that is, our U.S. military and our commitment not only to those who wear the uniform of the military—and, of course, I am aware of the Acting President pro tempore's long distinguished service—but also the solemn obligation we have to our veterans once they leave active-duty status.

They have more than upheld their commitment—in the mountains, in the valleys of Afghanistan, in the deserts of Iraq, and in postings around the world, from Japan, to Korea, to Kuwait, to Israel, to Germany, and all across the globe. Of course, they have joined generations of men and women—the “greatest generation,” of which my dad was a member, the World War II generation; and, of course, then those who fought in Korea, in Vietnam, and, of course, the most recent conflicts we have had, which I just mentioned, in Iraq and Afghanistan.

My strong conviction is that we owe a moral obligation, not just a legal obligation, to those veterans, to keep our commitments to them once they separate from military service.

I am sorry to say the Department of Veterans Affairs has repeatedly and outrageously failed to uphold its own commitment to America's Armed Forces and our veterans.

The problem, the way I see it, is we have almost become desensitized because we all know as a result of the drawdown of our military after our exit from Iraq and now Afghanistan we are getting a large number of people retiring from military service, so it is understandable there would be more pressure put on the Department of Veterans Affairs to process these claims, to process these retirements, but what we have learned is there are outrageous examples—for example, in Phoenix, where 40 veterans died because their names were taken off of the appointment system list in order to make the backlog look not as bad as it really was. Many of them had been put on what was called a secret waiting list that was designed to conceal the unconscionably long wait times endured by up to 1,600 sick veterans.

So what I mean when I say I think we have become almost desensitized to this backlog—where more than half of the claims now made with the VA are backlogged, according to the Department of Veterans Affairs' own criteria—it takes something like this, where 40 veterans have died because they were put on a secret waiting list in order to cook the books at the Phoenix VA, to hopefully wake us up and to get us to do something about this outrageous situation.

According to the investigation, high-level officials in the Phoenix VA knew about the secret waiting list, and they did nothing about it. It is even worse than that. Not only did the Phoenix officials tolerate this list, they actually defended it.

A former Phoenix VA doctor told CNN that the list “was deliberately put in place to avoid the VA's own internal rules.” That is why I call this a case of cooking the books. To avoid accountability, to avoid solving the problem, they tried to sweep the problem under the rug, and that is outrageous.

One of the victims of the secret waiting list was a 71-year-old Navy veteran named Thomas Breen. In late September, Mr. Breen was rushed to the

Phoenix VA hospital after he became ill. The doctors diagnosed him, knew he had a history of cancer, and they very clearly designated his condition as "urgent." That would indicate Mr. Breen should get another checkup within a week of his visit to the emergency room. Yet Mr. Breen was forced to wait and wait and wait and wait—even as he and his daughter-in-law made daily phone calls to the VA asking about an appointment and emphasizing the urgency of his medical condition. Each time they were told to wait just a little longer. Finally, a full 2 months after his initial ER visit, Mr. Breen passed away. The cause of death was stage 4 bladder cancer.

A week after that the VA finally called with Mr. Breen's appointment—after he died. By then, obviously, it was too late.

Stories such as Mr. Breen's should be a wake-up call to the U.S. Senate. They should be a wake-up call to the White House. They should pierce our sense of moral indignation and say: When are we going to do something about this backlog? When are we going to hold people accountable for cooking the books so that they avoid accountability for a backlog that we all know exists?

So I am suggesting again that the President needs to designate a point person who will come in and deal with this on an emergency basis; it is that serious. The President needs to treat this seriously—not ignore it, not sweep it under the rug—and the Senate needs to treat this with the urgency it deserves as well, which is why I hope the majority leader, who is the person responsible for such things, would designate or ask the committees with jurisdiction to hold emergency hearings to get to the bottom of this because we do not know whether this just happened in Phoenix. Chances are it did not, and I will mention another outrageous example in a minute. We need to know if this is just a local matter or endemic to the whole VA disability and health care system.

In Pittsburgh, we know there have been other problems. Six patients at the VA hospital died, and more than 20 others became sick, after an outbreak of Legionnaires' disease. As in Phoenix, patients at the Pittsburgh facility were kept in the dark about what was going on. It took "CBS News" doing an investigation to bring this to the light of day.

"CBS News" concluded:

An internal memo shows a top doctor at the hospital knew that Legionella—

Which causes Legionnaires' disease—could potentially be in the hospital's water system, and [he] recommended the use of bottled water. Though staff members were told to test patients for Legionnaires' disease if they exhibited certain symptoms, there is no evidence to suggest patients or their families were informed of management's concerns about a potential outbreak.

In other words, they were kept in the dark.

It is scandals such as this and a rampant lack of accountability that have prompted people such as Senator MARCO RUBIO from Florida to introduce legislation that would give the VA Secretary more authority to fire and discipline senior officials for abuses and failures on the job. I think that is a smart move, and I am proud to cosponsor that bill. Because the lack of accountability leading to the problems I have just described is absolutely appalling. It should shock all of us.

The underlying problem, which we have known about—to which I fear Congress and the Federal Government have become desensitized—is there are literally hundreds of thousands of U.S. military veterans who are waiting to have their disability, compensation, and pension claims processed and waiting more than the 125 days the VA calls a backlog.

According to the VA's own figures, in mid-April there were 602,000 compensation and pension claims pending nationwide, and a majority of them had been pending and in the backlog category.

For that matter, there are still 51,000 entitlement claims pending at just two VA regional offices, in Houston and Waco in my State. A majority of those claims are backlogged too.

I know that Congress has taken steps to address the backlog in claims. In the national defense authorization bill from last year, we included some of the provisions which authorized State-based veterans organizations, like those in Texas, to help the Federal Veterans' Administration expedite processing of these backlogged claims. But it is not enough. The evidence from Pittsburgh and the evidence from Phoenix indicates that it is not enough. So we have to do more.

This is not partisan politics. This should not be treated as business as usual. This should be a call to action on the part of the Senate and the Federal Government to live up to its obligations and its commitment to our Nation's veterans.

Just a few concluding words and thoughts about the challenges that face our current generation of military veterans. According to a recent survey, more than half of those who served in Afghanistan and Iraq struggle with some sort of physical or mental health issues stemming from their service. Some of them are relatively minor. Some of them are very serious, indeed. The serious ones have manifested themselves in horrible ways. For example, one out of every two Afghan and Iraq war veterans says they know a fellow servicemember that has either attempted or committed suicide. As I said a moment ago, those who sign up for the U.S. military and our all-volunteer force receive a promise—a promise that if they serve their country, if they can do their part, their country, our country, will do our part.

All they are asking for is us to make good on that promise. Serving Amer-

ica's veterans is one of the most important responsibilities the Federal Government has. The VA's failure to meet its responsibility is an ongoing scandal—one that I will continue drawing attention to until our veterans get the support they so rightfully deserve.

I hope my other colleagues, who I know share this commitment to our veterans, will come to the floor and urge the majority leader to ask the committees with jurisdiction to convene emergency hearings to get to the bottom of this, to find out if what happened in Phoenix and Pittsburgh are isolated events or if this a cancer that is eating away at our VA health care and disability system.

I call upon the President once again to appoint a point person to make sure that we get to the bottom of this as soon as possible because, of course, this is an executive branch function—the veterans health care system. I remember when healthcare.gov was rolled out and the Web site did not work the way the President expected it to. He appointed a point person to help make sure that all hands were on deck and we got to the bottom of the problem as soon as possible. I would think that this scandal in the Veterans' Administration and the way our veterans are being treated would at least equal the same sense of urgency and call for the same sort of response as the failure of the Web site for healthcare.gov.

So I hope our colleagues in the Senate can pull together to come to the service of our veterans in a way that they deserve. I hope the President views this with the kind of urgency that it really deserves and appoints a point person who can get to the bottom of this, working with Congress as quickly as possible so we can meet our obligations to our Nation's veterans.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO DARYL CHAPPELLE

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, before I give my intended remarks, I want to add my voice to others who have paid tribute to Daryl Chappelle, who retires today after 42 years of working in the Senate. I have only been here for 3 years, but I can tell you, in the time that I have been here, I look forward to running into Daryl as I make my trips back and forth between the Russell Senate Office Building and the Senate floor. There are certain people in life who just brighten your day. Every occasion when I have encountered Daryl during the workday, it has just been that experience.